

Ruth 3:1-18 – What Will Happen Next? – Lesson Summary

I'm sad to admit it but I can get lost watching iconic movie scenes on YouTube. There's something about these scenes that makes them so compelling. Inevitably, these scenes are always accompanied by beautiful orchestral scores or background music to intensify our emotions. The best scenes are a combination of both musical and cinematic brilliance. A movie of the Book of Ruth would likely provide these types of scenes. Ruth isn't only history, it's a story. The author's intent is to take us on a journey of God's faithfulness, one that keeps us guessing, anticipating, and rejoicing with each victory. *Ruth Ch. 3* plays like a movie as we jump from scene to scene experiencing questionable counsel, a quiet advance, and unquestionable character.

Ch. 3 begins with Naomi giving Ruth questionable counsel at best. She tells her to make herself as attractive as possible, slip into a man's bed in the cloak of darkness, and offer herself to Boaz. As a father, I can't imagine giving my daughter this kind of advice! As a man, I can't imagine experiencing this type of advance. Naomi appears to be taking matters into her own hands. She refuses to wait upon the Lord. Naomi's behavior shouldn't surprise us. Her husband Elimelech modeled this behavior to his family when he moved them to Moab for food rather than waiting upon the Lord. She's offered questionable advice to her daughters-in-law before when encouraging them to return to Moab. Naomi's plan has the potential to ruin Ruth's reputation as a woman of noble character. *Hosea 1:9* reminds us that prostitutes go to threshing floor. Naomi has previously warned Ruth of her need to be protected from potential harm, but now has little regard for her own advice. Naomi may be offering questionable counsel, but Ruth remains faithful to her advice.

The scene changes as Ruth obeys Naomi and does exactly what she's instructed. She beautifies herself, waits until dark, and lays at the feet of Boaz as he's sleeping. What the heck is happening? Ruth, a woman of noble character, is now laying by a man's feet in the dark. When Boaz is startled awake, Ruth declares her presence and adds to Naomi's plan. Ruth goes off script. Instead of waiting on Boaz as she was instructed, she makes a clear advance as she asks Boaz to "spread your wings over your servant, for you are, a redeemer." (*v. 3:9*) Her words should sound familiar. In *Ruth 2:12* Boaz speaks these same words over Ruth. "The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given to you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge." Ruth's quiet advance has now become a proposal for Boaz to act like the LORD they serve. She is acknowledging the words he's spoken before as she declares that he can provide the earthly redemption that the LORD has already provided spiritually. Like Christ is our spiritual redeemer, Boaz can be Ruth's physical redeemer.

Our scene shifts as Boaz responds to her advance. Boaz's unquestionable character is evident as he remains faithful to Ruth and the Lord. Every man must admit this would be a tempting situation. A beautiful woman lays at your feet in the cover of darkness and has asked to be yours. We should be humbled by Boaz's response as he leads her as any man of God should. Boaz's character remains as consistent in the dark as it is in the light. Boaz remains a man of noble character. First, Boaz refers to Ruth as a daughter, acknowledging that she is a daughter of the King of Kings. Her identity goes beyond what any earthly relationship could bring. Next, Boaz remains faithful to God's Word as he acknowledges there is a redeemer more qualified than he. He is willing to trust that the Lord will make this relationship happen if He desires. Boaz will then instruct Ruth to remain until morning in order to provide physical protection as well as protecting her reputation. In a final act of grace and mercy, Boaz provides Ruth with six measures of barley. We find out later that this barley was intended to fill Naomi. The woman who had earlier declared that she went away full and had come back empty is now full again. Boaz will become both Ruth and Naomi's redeemer as he provides a picture of the grace and mercy of Christ who fills us with His spirit. Boaz is truly a man of unquestionable character. However, his character is a direct result of the loving grace and mercy that he has received from the LORD.

Discussion:

- 1) When have you offered poor advice to someone? Do you think it was sinful or simply unwise?
- 2) How have you seen God redeem your mistakes?
- 3) Boaz remains faithful to the Lord amidst great temptation? Where have you faced temptation? How have you responded?